



Overview of the FoodShare Program

FoodShare Wisconsin was created to help stop hunger and to improve nutrition and health in our state. FoodShare Wisconsin is a government program that helps individuals and families who have limited money to buy the food they need for good health.

The USDA is responsible for setting the basic program rules so they are similar everywhere in the country. The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services administers Wisconsin's FoodShare Program. Government workers at county, tribal, or state human or social service agencies (referred to as "local agencies") determine eligibility for FoodShare benefits and are responsible for issuing benefits.

Who Uses FoodShare?

Individuals or families who use FoodShare Wisconsin include people of all ages and ethnicities who are employed but have low incomes, are living on small or fixed incomes, have lost their jobs, or have disabilities and cannot work. Some households may receive benefits for years, while others will only need assistance for a few months until they can get back on their feet.

Who Can Apply for FoodShare?

Anyone can apply for FoodShare benefits. An individual or family does not need to be eligible for, or apply for, W-2 to use FoodShare benefits. U.S. citizens and certain citizens of other countries who live in the United States legally and permanently may qualify for FoodShare benefits.

A household may be able to enroll if:

- The individual or family income is at or below the monthly program limit (see table below)
- The applicant(s) are Wisconsin residents.
- The applicant(s) are United States citizens or citizens of another country who live in the United States legally and permanently for at least five years.

Additionally, some households may be eligible for expedited services when applying for benefits if their total monthly income and available assets are less than their monthly expenses, or if their monthly income is less than \$150 and they have less than \$100 in cash, checking and savings.

People affected by natural disasters may also be eligible for FoodShare benefits. If a natural disaster (flood, tornado, etc.) occurs, special procedures and a simplified application process are used to issue FoodShare benefits quickly to victims of the disaster.

Also, if food purchased with FoodShare benefits were destroyed in a household misfortune or disaster, FoodShare Wisconsin can replace those items.

What types of items can I purchase with FoodShare?

FoodShare benefits can be used to buy foods such as:

- Breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables, meats, fish and poultry, dairy products, non-perishable food items, and seeds and plants which produce food for the household to eat.

FoodShare benefits cannot be used to buy items such as:

- Non-food items, such as pet foods, personal care items, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes or tobacco, as well as food that will be eaten in the store or hot, prepared foods.

What are the income limits for FoodShare?

FoodShare eligibility income limits are based on the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), which are defined by Congress each year.

***FOODSHARE MONTHLY PROGRAM INCOME LIMITS**

People in Household	Gross Monthly Income Limit	Maximum Monthly FoodShare Benefits
1	\$1816	\$200
2	\$2452	\$367
3	\$3090	\$526
4	\$3726	\$668
5	\$4362	\$793
6	\$5000	\$952

(These are valid through September 2012).

Who administers the FoodShare program?

The FoodShare program is administered by government workers at county, tribal, or state human or social service agencies (referred to as "local agencies"). These workers determine eligibility for FoodShare benefits, are responsible for issuing benefits, and also process six-month and annual reviews necessary for staying in the program.

In Wisconsin, households with dependent children and/or elderly, blind, or disabled individuals are processed at the county agency. (Example: families w/children, seniors, people receiving SSI or Social Security Disability).

Households without dependent children and who have no one in the household who is elderly, blind, or disabled are processed by the state Enrollment Services Center. (Example: single adults, couples without minor children)

What happens after someone applies?

After a household applies for benefits, the application is sent to the local agency for processing. By law, the agency has up to 30 business days to process the application, unless the person qualifies for expedited services. If a household qualifies for expedited services, the application must be processed within 7 business days. All applicants must also complete an interview with a state or county caseworker before a decision can be made. The interview can be done in-person or over the phone. Applicants must also send in proof of certain items (identification, income, etc) before a decision can be made.

After a household has been approved for benefits, they must complete benefit renewal reviews every six months. They must also report any change in information related to their case (income, household status, etc).

What do the QUEST card and QUEST sign look like?

Current QUEST card



Version prior to 10/22/07



QUEST sign

